

(TMI Journeys - June 2016)

## SCIENCE AND HAPPINESS

Happiness — that powerful, sublime, ethereal state of being. We may not agree on a definition but we know it when we feel it. And we know when that feeling is missing.

In the absence of happiness, thoughts abound:

- “I will be happy if ... I have more money/time/love/health.”
- “I will be happy when ... I have fulfilling work/the right partner/the perfect teacher.”
- “I could be happy if ... I deserve it/I earn it/someone gives it to me.”
- “I would be happy if ... I hadn’t been treated badly.”

Is happiness more than a matter of circumstance? Science has trained its laser-like gaze on this question with interesting results. Studies are showing that thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors have a significant impact on brain development, life satisfaction, and happiness. We're also seeing an increased focus on happiness as a compelling topic of investigation in mainstream social sciences and hard science. Take a look at some of the work recently undertaken.

### **The Secret of Happiness Revealed by Harvard Study by [George Brandt, Forbes.com](#)**

The now well-known Harvard study revealed that

*Happiness comes from choosing to be happy with whatever you do, strengthening your closest relationships and taking care of yourself physically, financially and emotionally.*

*... The correlation between happiness and occupation, income or wealth is far less than the correlation between happiness and how people feel about their occupation, income or wealth.*

### **Project Happiness — 7 Happiness Habits, Backed by Science**

According to Project Happiness, which is “dedicated to empowering people with the resources to create greater happiness within themselves and the world,”

*Although happiness is a timeless and universal human quest, only in recent years has research turned its focus on how happiness can be sustained and increased. Science*

*has now confirmed that with certain practices we can change the neural pathways of our brain. Happiness is a set of skills we can learn through practice.*

## **Happiness Research Institute — Improving Quality of Life by Exploring Human Happiness**

Similarly, the Happiness Research Institute is an independent think-tank exploring why some societies are happier than others. Their mission is “to inform decision makers of the causes and effects of human happiness, make subjective well-being part of the public policy debate, and improve the quality of life for citizens across the world.”

### **World Happiness Report**

In addition, we have the "World Happiness Report" 2016 update, which ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, that was released in Rome in advance of UN World Happiness Day, March 20th. "The widespread interest in the World Happiness Reports, of which this is the fourth, reflects growing global interest in using happiness and subjective well-being as primary indicators of the quality of human development. Because of this growing interest, many governments, communities, and organizations are using happiness data, and the results of subjective well-being research, to enable policies that support better lives."

[Go HERE and scroll down to download a copy of the World Happiness Report](#)

### **Studies Find that Participation in Multiple TMI Programs = Greater Life Satisfaction**



Closer to home, TMI friend and researcher Cam Danielson completed a two-part, longitudinal study that looked at the long-term benefits of participating in the Institute's graduate level programs. Danielson found that "... multiple program participants have a higher degree of life

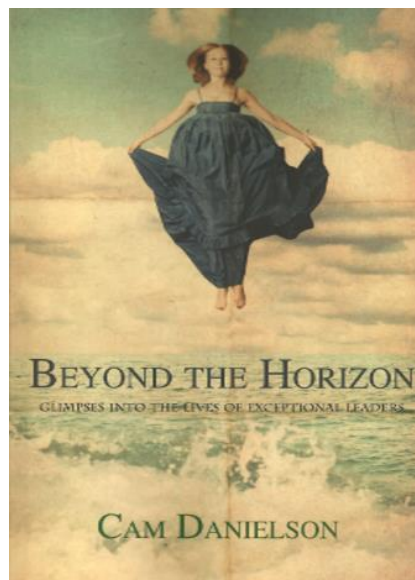
satisfaction and self-efficacy, and in terms of their motives for attending TMI, were more curious and interested in self-development.”

Danielson studies:

[Report of Findings: Phase I of a Study on the Effects of Long-Term Participation in The Monroe Institute Programs](#)

[Report of Findings: Phase II of a Study on the Effects of Long-Term Participation in The Monroe Institute Programs](#)

### *Beyond the Horizon*



Danielson’s experience interviewing several of his TMI research subjects inspired him to write, *Beyond the Horizon: Glimpses into the Lives of Exceptional Leaders*, a book of stories, reflections, and insights about living and leading wholeheartedly in an age of rapid transformation. It is told through the lives of an extraordinary group of people who operate at a deep level of being. They have made the work of building a rich inner life—soul work—the means for greater adaptive capacity.